

*Divine Rules for Christian Unity  
Opened and Urged.*

A  
**S E R M O N**  
Preach'd in the  
**Cathedral Church**  
**N O R W I C H,**  
*October 16. 1692.*

By ERASMIUS WARREN, Rector of Worlington  
in Suffolk.

*Be of one Mind, 2 Cor. 13. 11. If there be therefore any Consolation in CHRIST; if any Comfort of Love; if any Fellowship of the SPIRIT; if any Bowels and Mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, Phil. 2. 1, 2.*

*L O N D O N,  
Printed for Samuel Oliver Bookseller in Norwich, and are to  
be sold by J. Robinson in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1692.*

John

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To the Worshipful  
MICHAEL BEVERLY Esq;  
M A Y O R  
O F T H E  
City of NORWICH.

S I R,

**I**T was St. Cyprian's Complaint long since (and a very sad one, because a very true one) \* That the Devil seeing his Idols left, and his Seats and Temples forsaken by a Multitude of Believing People, thought of a new Cheat, how under the very Title of the Christian Name, he might deceive the Unwary. He invented Heresies and Schisms, whereby he might subvert the Faith, corrupt the Truth, and cut UNITY asunder.

\* Videns ille idola derelicta, & per nimium credentium populum sedes suas ac tempia deserta, excogitaverit novam fraudem, ut sub ipso Christiani nominis titulo fallat incautos. Hæreses inventit & Schismata, quibus subverteret fidem, veritatem corrumperet, scinderet Unitatem.  
De Unit. Eccle.

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*And how very successful this Invention of his has been, and how many and grievous Mischiefs it has wrought, and may still produce, Experience shews us, and gives us but too good Grounds to suspect. I pray GOD make us thoroughly sensible of it, and so deeply affect every one of us with it; as that the Dangers which threaten us, and grow upon us from our unhappy Divisions, may be timely prevented, and for ever superseded, by a speedy and perfect Closure of all sides. And O what a Blessed Change would it be (considering how we are crumbled into Sects and Factions) to have our many Differences moulded up into one common Interest; and all separate Parties melted down into Christian Unity!*

*Might this Discourse in the least Measure contribute to that Glorious Work, I should never repent of its Publication, though I was drawn to it with Reluctancy.*

*I confess, Sir, when I outstood your first Motions to it, and those that were made by other excellent Persons, while I was in your City; I hoped and concluded that I had finally freed my self from farther Solicitations of that nature. But when I found that they followed me into the Country, and when I met with this Passage, amongst others, in your Letter, It is not only my Opinion, that your Sermon will be Serviceable to the Publick, towards Healing the Breaches*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

Breaches that are amongst us; but others of better Judgment than my self, do unanimously agree to the same; and all People that I converse with, desire that I would use my Interest, to perswade you to Print it. *I then thought I had reason to submit, and accordingly have done it.*

*And truly fear of Censure, as well as force of Intreaty, prevailed with me to gratifie you in the Instance. For in case I had refused, they who desired the Sermon might come abroad, would have condemn'd me, it may be, for not duly practising my own Doctrin, which press'd Men by all the means they could use, to endeavour Unity: Than which (you both wisely and seriously note in your Letter aforesaid) as nothing can be more seasonably discoursed on; so there is not any thing more desirable by good Christians, or more to be sought after in this divided Nation. I heartily wish that All were of your Mind, then it might be hoped that their Endeavours after Spiritual Unity, would be such, as GOD would Bless with Happy Success. At least, Sir, it would make People very careful to omit nothing conducive thereunto, if I may judge by your Procedure. For not so much as One single Sermon, tending to Union, could be heard by you; but as mean as it is, you would have it made publick. In case it proves Instrumental that way, I shall greatly.*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

greatly rejoice in my compliance with you. And if it does not, I shall still have the Satisfaction of answering the Desires of many Good Men; and more particularly of testifying my self to be,

Honoured Sir,

Your most Humble Servant,

*E. Warren.*

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### Ephesians 4. 3.

*Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the SPIRIT in the Bond of Peace.*

**A** Most Kind and Important Petition was that which our adorable LORD in the Days of his Flesh, put up for his Proselytes, St. John 17. 21.  
*That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee ; that they also may be one in us.* O that the GOD who heareth Prayers, would please to answer it in the Fullness of it !

But that so great a Blessing may come down exuberantly on the Body of Christians, and continue with them ; something must be done on their part : That is, the Unity their LORD prayed for, they must labour after.

It is stiled *the Unity of the SPIRIT*, because as it joyns us together in *one Mind or Spirit* ; so it is wrought by the Efficiency or Operation of the HOLY GHOST.

It may be thus described: It is a *Blessed Agreement of Spiritual Persons, in Spiritual Matters, to Spiritual Ends.*

An AGREEMENT: For even in Natural as well as amongst Rational Beings, there can be no Union where there is no Concord.

An *Agreement of SPIRITUAL PERSONS*: That is, of CHRISTIANS: Who, though in their Natural Capacity they are like other Men ; yet in their Religious Profession they are distinguish'd from them, it being *Spiritual* in all regards. For the Author of it is *Spiritual*, CHRIST: The Rule of it is *Spiritual*, the Gospel: The Instruments of it are *Spiritual Ordinances*: The Exercise of it is in *Spiritual Duties*: The Ends of it are *Spiritual Excellencies*: The Motives

Motives to it are Spiritual Inducements: The Rewards of it are Spiritual Attainments: The very Confederacy in it is by Spiritual Ligaments: Whether we consider Christians as tied together in a Community amongst themselves; or as a Mystical Body joyned to their Sovereign Head. So that *Infidels* agreeing never so well, must be wide of this Unity of the SPIRIT: At best they can make but a *Political* or *Superstitious Society*.

*An Agreement in Spiritual MATTERS:* As in *Doctrine, Sacraments, Liturgy, Government*: So that let Christians themselves agree never so fully as to Secular Affairs, they would be much below the Unity of the SPIRIT: Their Agreement would rise no higher than a *Civil or Amicable Combination*.

*To Spiritual ENDS:* As to the Honour of God, the Interest of His Kingdom, the Good and Happiness of the Souls of Men: So that should Christians agree never so thoroughly in Spiritual Matters to *Temporal Ends*, they would be short of the Unity of the SPIRIT still. For their Ends must either be *Innocent* or *Sinful*. If *Innocent*, they would be but a *Selfish Association*: If *Sinful*, an *Impious and Unlawful one*.

And therefore lastly, it is a *BLESSED Agreement*; and that in several Respects: In respect of its *Origin*, as springing from *Blessed Principles*: In respect of its *Influence*, as producing *Blessed Effects*: In respect of its *Tendency* and *Subservience*, as promoting our present, and ministering to our future endless Beatitude. And thus it is distinguish'd from all other Agreements upon Earth.

Now to preserve and promote this Spiritual Unity, I shall humbly offer some plain *Rules or Directions*. Six of them shall be taken out of the Context, and for that reason they must be of the more Weight, and I hope will be of the more Efficacy. They are these:

1<sup>st</sup>. Be sensible of the great need of Unity.

2<sup>nd</sup>. Learn to be deeply Humble.

3<sup>rd</sup>. Labour

- 3ly. Labour for a meek Temper of Mind.
- 4ly. Arm your selves with Long-suffering.
- 5ly. Exercise mutual Forbearance.
- 6ly. Live in Christian Love.

They are all couched in the two first Verses of the Chapter: *I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called; with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, Forbearing one another in Love.*

First, Be sensible of the great need of Unity: It is absolutely necessary upon the Account of our Calling: Of our high, holy, Heavenly Calling; as it is denominated in the Sacred Volume. And therefore that we might go the right way to work, and be inclin'd to endeavour it from a just Sense of the Necessity of it; the Apostle directs us, in the first place, *to walk ἀξιοῦσας κλησίου, worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called:* Intimating we can never do that, never be worthy Disciples of CHRIST, without Unity.

For impossible it is that any should walk worthy of their Calling, whatever it be, unless they answer the Nature of it, and advance it. But there is no doing either of these, as to our Christian Vocation, without Unity.

Without Unity we cannot answer the Nature of our Calling. And the Reason is evident, because a main part of that Vocation is Unity: As GOD has called us to Peace, and called us to Holiness, and called us to His Kingdom, as the Divine Oracles testify: So he has called us to Unity, as much as to any thing, as appears there.

Nor must we forget that the Holy JESUS honoured Christians with many excellent and noble Gifts, and sometimes with glorious or miraculous ones, on purpose to bring them into Unity, and keep them in it. *The Glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them:* And why? *That they may be ONE, even as we are one,* St. John 17. 22.

Yea, the great things of our Religion, (not to say the whole of it) seem to be design'd to this End; to indear us

mightily and closely to unite us. The very Genius of it leads that way directly, and invites and draws most powerfully to it: For says St. Paul, just after the Text, *There is one Body, and one SPIRIT, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling; one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism, one GOD and Father of all.* Such a Divine Sorites or heap of Arguments persuading to Unity, as can no where be parallell'd. Were Christians incorporate in different Bodies; or were the one Body in which they are incorporate, animated by different Spirits; or did the one SPIRIT which animates them, allot them different Callings; or did the one Calling allotted them, allow them different Hopes; or did the one Hope allowed them, tye them to different LORDS; or did the one LORD they are obliged to, give them different Faiths; or to the one Faith given them, were they admitted by different Baptisms; or in their one initiating Baptism, were they devoted to different GODS; or were the one GOD, to whom they are devoted, not their Father; they might then be divided, and could not well help it. Yea, Division, which is now their Sin, might then be their Duty. But the Case is nothing so. On the contrary, there is but one Body, that is, the Church into which true Christians are grafted: But one SPIRIT, the HOLY GHOST, by which they are illivened: But one Calling, the Evangelical Religion in which they are engaged: But one Hope, that of Salvation, by which they are encouraged: But one LORD, that is, CHRIST, by whom they are redeemed: But one Faith, that is, of the Gospel, which by them is professed: But one Baptism, that is, of JESUS, by which they are consecrated: But one GOD, that is, the living and true GOD, by whom they were created, are governed, and shall be preserved; and this GOD is their Father too, and therefore they must all be nearly related. So that here is such a number of Motives to Unity, and of strong Obligations binding to it, that *none more need,* and

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*few more can be added of the same Nature. Were they rightly considered, how is it possible that Christians should divide? When in so doing, or suffering it to be done, they must break the Frame or Contexture of their Religion, and go against the Temper and Constitution of it, and fail most shamefully in their proper Vocation.*

If at any time therefore, or upon any occasion, we grow too hot, and our Minds ferment, and our Passions boil, so as to threaten any thing of Division, let us but take our Bibles in our Hands, and deliberately read, and seriously ruminate on this Paragraph, and surely it will be enough to cool that Heat, and quench that Fire, which would inflame us to Dissent. Let me ask, are we willing to unchristian our selves? Why, if we do not endeavour to keep Unity, we take too great a step towards it: At least we fall very short of our *Calling*, and whatever Figures we seem to make, in a great measure we are no better than Cyphers: Christians without Unity, and without endeavouring to keep it, are somewhat like Scholars without Learning, and without studying to get it: They want an Essential of their Profession, or a most necessary Piece of it; nor do they take due care to attain unto it and be accomplish'd in it.

And as we cannot answer the *Nature* of our *Calling* without Unity, so neither can we *advance* it. And therefore when our LORD prayed for his Disciples (as we noted at first) that they *all might be one*, He gives this Reason why He sued for their Unity, *That the World might believe that Thou hast sent me*: So that Unity in the Church of GOD, is to propagate Faith in the *Messiah* or Son of GOD, and to advance Christianity in the World: And is it not highly needful then, and does it not behove us to endeavour to keep it amongst our selves, and to promote it so far as we can with others?

Our Blessed LORD taught us to Pray (and I hope we do it every day more than once) that His *Kingdom may come*; That His Heavenly Religion may grow great and powerful, and rule in the Hearts and Lives of Men; That it may take deep root in all places, and yield much Fruit; That it may thrive and flourish more than ever it did, ascending to the highest Pitch, and spreading to the widest Latitude. But when we pray thus, if we do not endeavour to keep Unity, like egregious Dissemblers we not only frustrate our own Devotions; but to GOD's Dishonour, and the great prejudice of our selves and others, set back the Blessing for which we supplicate.

It is the Judgment of Learned and Pious Men, that before the End of the World, there shall be an happy Change in it: The Jews shall be converted, the Gentiles more fully called, and true Christianity greatly exalted. Now would it not be huge Satisfaction to us, to have this Glorious Elevation of Religion come to pass in *our days*? Why then let all unfeigned Servants of JESUS do what in them lies to hasten it: And amongst other things conducive thereto, let them endeavour to keep the Unity of the SPIRIT: So we shall see Religion rise, and help it to culminate or advance apace to its wished Height. And when once it gets into its *Zenith* in the Church, and shines forth in its full Strength and Lustre, who knows what an Influence it may have far and near, and how much of the World may be taken Captive with the Charming Beauty and Glories of it? Whereas Divisions do naturally throw Contempt on Christianity, and grievously diminish and eclipse it; for it makes strangers to it apt to suspect, that it is too weak to carry on its own Designs, whereof Unity is one: Or else that its Professors (who are fittest to judge) have no great opinion of its worth, and therefore slight it in one of the grand Necessaries of it: And when they who are unacquainted with our Religion, or have little esteem

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## Divine Rules for Christian Unity.

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and love for the same, have occasion given them to take such crooked Measures of it; no wonder if they be prejudiced and set against it, and so its Propagation be check'd and hindred.

Upon this account, in the first place, let us zealously endeavour to keep the Unity of the SPIRIT; else we plainly declare, that we have no thorough Sense of the Nature of our Calling, and no just Concern to advance it as we ought; and so neither do, nor can walk worthy of it: And therefore St. Paul exhorting Christians to a Conversation becoming the Gospel, which is the same thing as to walk worthy of their Vocation; adviseth them to stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, Phil. 1. 27. That for the first Rule.

Secondly, Learn to be deeply Humble: Pride in a Society, is like Motion in Matter, which naturally works a Separation of Parts, and the Dissolution of Continuity; and is able to turn the hardest Rock into volatile or fluid Atoms. But Humility, on the other side, is like Rest, which unites and Consolidates. And therefore to preserve Unity, the Apostle will have us, in the second place, to walk ~~μετανοεῖσθωσιν~~, with all Lowlines.

Pride makes Men conceited; and Self-conceit makes them singular; and Singularity makes them differ from others; and Difference from others (be it in Opinion or Practice) breeds Dissentions; and Dissentions shatters Unity.

Pride makes Men Morose; and Moroseness makes them Peevish; and Peevishness makes them Captious and Humorous; and captious Humor someness hinders Compliance in requisite things; and Non-compliance hinders Conformity; and Non-conformity disturbs Unity.

Pride makes Men Heady; and Headiness makes them Unruly; and Unruliness makes them Disorderly; and Disorderliness makes them Disobedient; and Disobedience disjoyns Unity.

Pride

Pride makes Men Contentious; it is the sole or chief cause of their being so: *Only by Pride cometh Contention,* Prov. 13. 10. And Contention begets Division; and Division is an actual Breach of Unity.

Pride makes Men Ambitious; and Ambition makes them Furious in driving to what they aim at: And when their Fury is up, and they are hot in their Chase, they care not through what they run, so they attain their End. If *Heresie or Schism, Sedition or Rebellion,* lye in their way, they matter not rushing into any of them, perhaps not plunging into all. But then Unity is sure to be overthrown and trampled on.

Nor are particular Churches only thus rent to pieces by Pride, but also the Church Universal is filled with Schisms. For what is it that makes one Church *Usurp* upon another; that sets one Church to *Domineer* over another; that causes one Church to *Excommunicate* and *Anathematize* another, whereby Catholick Unity is destroyed, but Pride chiefly?

As we prize and love Unity therefore, let us down with Pride, and resolve to walk bumbly with GOD and all Men; towards our Betters, Equals and Inferiors; towards them that are our Friends, and them that are our Enemies; towards them that agree with us, and them that dissent from us; let us walk with *Lowliness*: If they be haughty and insolent towards us, let us, for inestimable Unity's sake, demean our selves with all *Lowliness* towards them.

And why should we not? For Lord! What have we to be proud of? Are we not Frailty and Dust, and so Nothing? Are we not Corruption and Sin, and so worse than nothing? And for such Nothings, and worse than Nothings as we, to swell with Pride, would be Folly and Sin enough, though the Poyson of it wrought only *within* us. But when its Venom is spreading and diffusive, and breaths out a Contagion fatal to Unity; not to throw off Pride and put on Humility,

Humility, must be sinful Folly of a larger size, and GOD forbid we should be guilty of it.

Thirdly, *Labour for a meek Temper of Mind*: As the Wise Man assures us, *Wrath is Cruel, and Anger is Outrageous*, Prov. 27. 4. And truly so Cruel is Wrath, that it will kill Unity, where it is not restrained. And as Solomon there expresses it, such a ήρων or *outrageous Inundation* is Anger, that if it be not kept within Bounds, it will not fail to overflow and drown it. And therefore to preserve Unity, the Apostle urges us, in the third place, to walk μετὰ τηρίας, with *MEEKNESS*.

Anger, we know, is a short Madness, as the Moralist teaches: And where it Tumultuates and Rages, it even degrades Humanity, and makes Men to act in ways unworthy of themselves: It distracts the Mind, and roils the Spirit, and throws it into wild and ruful Disorders. It puts down the use of Judgment for the time, and exalts Phrensie into the Throne of Reason: It quite overthrows Wisdom's Empire; and putting the Scepter into Folly's hand, sets it up to domineer in all our Capacities. For then it is, to use Philo's Distinction, that τὸ θῆλυ, the Feminine Part of us, prevails against τὸ ἄρρεν, the Masculine: That παις ἡ παιών, the Child in us, according to *Simplicius*, is too hard for τὸ ενθεωπός, the inner Man, as the Christian Doctrin calls it: That θεῖος, the Beast, according to *Plotinus*, vanquishes νοῦς, the intellectual Power: That Αλογία, according to the Stoicks, Unreasonableness, baffles τὴν the Mind: That Passions, which according to *Maximus Tyrius*, are δῆμος, the Populace, or Mob of the Soul; mutiny against and overcome τὸ Ηγεόντος, the ruling Faculty. And so, to speak in *Lucian's Language*, κνειάτατον τῆς Δυχίς, the Lordly part of the Soul, which, he says, is Δαιμόνιον ἕκαστη λόθις, the Demon given to every one, (and in *Plato's* stile is οὐδεὶς, the GOD within us) and dwells in ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ σώματι, in the Top of the Body; is sunk below its own Dignity, and indecently subjugated to base Extravagancies.

So that if through want of Meekness we be habitually Wrathful, and subject to vehement Transports of Anger, we must needs be unfit to keep Unity, as being at variance with our selves, and quite unking'd and out of order, by reason of intestine Feuds and Jarrings: And they that have lost the Government of *themselves*, cannot but be destitute of that Gentleness and Moderation, and of that prudent Care and winning Conduct, which is necessary to preserving Unity with *others*.

But then a choleric ireful Temper untam'd, being so utterly inconsistent with Unity, and destructive to it, how ready should we be to listen to the Apostle, where he adviseth (in the last Verse save one of this Chapter) *Let all Wrath and Anger be put away.* Let us quell those fierce and blustering Storms, which are apt not only to blow up Autocracy by the Roots, but to ruffle Unity by ruining Self-government: And let us labour hard for a sedate and calm, for a quiet and composed Frame of Mind ; for so mild, and smooth, and meek a Temper, as may dispose us to Unity, and fix us in it ; as may glue us together in a regular Communion, and make us stick close and fast to each other, by a firm and inseparable Spiritual Cohesion.

But if we will not take the Holy Council given us, and curb our hot and turbulent Spirits, but will carry Gunpowder Passions about us, that are ready to take fire from every spark of Provocation which is struck into them ; no marvel if at last we be miserably blown up, and broken and shattered all to pieces.

Fourthly, *Arm your selves with Long suffering.* The three former Rules proved against our giving Offence to others ; But Unity may as well be hindred or destroyed by taking the Offences which they give: And therefore to fortifie us against that, and so the better to sectire Unity, the Apostle desires us, in the Fourth place, to walk ~~as many virtues~~, with Long suffering.

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We are infallibly assured that Offences will come; some of a lower and lighter, others of an higher and heavier Nature: Some single and transient, others complicated and more permanent: Some through the Weakness of simple and unwary, others through the Willfulness of ill-meaning Men. Now *our part* it is to be *roiled* and *provoked by none* of these; but to *suffer them all* so far as we may, and as evenly as we can, for dear Unity's sake.

And so let us do: Let us be patient toward all Men, *1 Thess. 5. 14.* If any affront us, if any abuse us, if any injure us, let us take all patiently; receiving their various Wrongs and Contumelies, just as a Feather-bed or Bank of Sand, do Stones thrown against them, without noise, or rebounding back upon those that threw them.

Not that Christians are at any rate to become Stoicks. That's not only improper, but impossible; for they who are tenderly to sympathize with *all*, can never be senseless in *themselves*, nor possessed with dull Apathy as to their own Concerns. But let us so improve in the Grace of Long-suffering, as to be able generously to overlook Indignities; and to stand under Injuries with so little uneasiness and ill Resentment, as that when we feel the *worst* Harms which Men can do us, they may *seem* as if they were not done. *Ye have not injured me at all,* said the great inspired Doctor to the *Galatians*. And this he spake when they had aspersed him with black and bitter Calumnies, and vehemently opposed both his Doctrine and Practice, and even question'd his very Apostolical Commission: Than which, what could go nearer to him?

Fifthly, *Exercise mutual Forbearance.* Bear ye one another's Burdens, says the HOLY GHOST, *Gal. 6. 2.* Though the *Infirmities* of People, or their *Faults* be such, as to become an *heavy Burthen* to us; yet still we are bound in many Cases, and with much Patience, to bear with them. The last Rule intimates so much. But that

*Toleration* or bearing with them, is not enough to preserve Unity, unless we go farther, and *forbear* them also. And therefore to this the Apostle leads us, in the fifth place, *ἀρετὴ πρὸς ἄλλον*, *Forbearing one another.*

And this Forbearance must be express'd in these five Instances at least.

Forbear	<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 10px;"> <i>Despising.</i>  <i>Censuring.</i>  <i>Aggravating.</i>  <i>Reproaching.</i>  <i>Revenging.</i> </div>
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First, Forbear *Despising*. Honour all Men, is the Divine Command ; and therefore we can slight none scornfully and be blameless : Differ from Men we may, and in some things we must, but Despise them we may not : That's a Sin, and if we commit it, 'tis at our Peril.

Thy way is strait and even, and safe and pleasant, and in it thou walkest smoothly on, while many unhappy Travellers about thee do otherwise : Some of them slip, and some of them fall, and some of them wander they know not whither: But wilt thou despise them for this? Tell me first, Why art not thou of their unfortunate number? Perhaps thy Education was better, or thy Apprehension is quicker, or thy Judgment is sounder. O think then who gave thee these Advantages, and be thankful to *Him*: And because he hath denied the like to others, be not slighty but pitiful to *them*. If *thine* Eye-sight be clearer than *theirs*, make good use of it ; but by no means laugh at the Blind for losing their way : *They* would be glad with all their Hearts, to have as *good* Eyes as *thine* in their Heads ; and if they had them, might use them as *well*, it may be *better* than *thou* dost. Pity them therefore in that they want ; what, it may be, they are willing to have, and what it were better for them to enjoy.

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Should any leave such a Church as this, wherein are all things Necessary and Decent, to worship GOD in a raw and wild kind of Room, we should be apt to think them guilty of *Weakness*: And so we should likewise believe *them* to be, who go out of such a lightsom Church, into one more Gay and Splendid, but withall so dark, that in it they cannot see either to read the Scriptures, or to discern Bread from Flesh, or to distinguish Wine from Blood. But then the more our Brethrens *Weakness* appears to *us*, the more Commiseration we must shew to *them*: But if instead of Compassion we express Scorn, we mistake unhappily as well as *they*, and worst *our selves* by evil *Carriage*, as *they do themselves* by an evil *Choice*. And shall be so far from drawing them to Unity, that we shall rather drive them farther from it.

Secondly, *Forbear Censuring*. 'Tis good to have a piercing impartial Eye, but yet on many things we must look with connivence, and not only wink at, but extenuate them: We are not to put Mens Actions upon the Tenters, and to stretch them to the worst sense they are capable of; if we do, we violate the Law of our Heavenly Religion, which lays an Obligation upon us to the contrary, *Judge not*. Nor are we bound from it in point of *Religion* only, but of *Policy* too; upon account of *Interest*, as well as of *Duty*. *Judge not, that ye be not judged*: Plainly intimating, that if we be *severe*, the Rigor we use we must expect, and that from GOD, as well as from *Men*. Let us therefore weigh *others* with Grains of Allowance, that so the same may be done to *us*. But if we carp Censoriously, and fling at *them*, should GOD not be angry, *Men* will retaliate; and we need not question but we shall meet with those that will pay us sufficiently in *our own Coin*.

Though were nothing of this to ensue, we ought to be wonderful Cautious in Censuring, for fear of *Mistake*, which we may easily run into: For there may be great difference betwixt what *seems* to be, and what really is. Judging ~~as~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>according to</sup> appearance, made our SAVIOUR once pass for a *Sabbath breaker*, and St. Paul for a *Setter-forth of Strange GODS*. And through the same false Glass do they look, who in our necessary Rejection of dangerous Errors, and Separation from them, can descry Heresie and damnable Apostasie; and in our lawful useful Ceremonies, can see Antichristianism and gross Idolatry. But that's the common Fault of rash Censuring, to clap a most ugly Vizard of Guilt upon the Face of Innocence; and to besmear Integrity with misimputed Wickedness. In dread and Detestation of so foul an Enormity, let us Censure none but upon surest Grounds.

And truly where *Actions* deserve to be censured, the *Agents* may sometimes be very well spared: For where there is Darkness in the Mind, there may be Sincerity in the Soul; and invincible Ignorance will excuse many Errors: It is one thing not to discern the Truth, and another to deny it, desert it, detain it in Unrighteousness: We are not presently to count them *desperately Wicked*, all whose Practices we cannot justify: Heaven it self looks not upon all as Factious and Idolatrous in their *Hearts*, who are so in their *Ways*, in their *Worship*: Let not us accuse, where there is any good hope that GOD will approve; nor be forward to condemn, whom his Mercy may acquit. As many are much worse than their Profession can permit, so some are much better than their Principles do allow. Put the favourablest Construction therefore upon *all* Persons and their Actions, and think as fairly of them as possibly you can, taking in all appendent Circumstances, and judging by the Rules of ingenuous Candor: For I do not mean that any of us should call

call Black White at any rate. Where things are Evident and Notorious, we must see them in their own Colours, and not stick to call them by their proper Names. They who call Evil Good, and put Darkness for Light, are marked out by GOD Himself, in the fifth of *Isaiah*; and we there find what Stamp they are of: To pronounce that naught which really is so, is no culpable Censure, but a commendable Judgment: And they who cannot or dare not pass it, upon just occasion, proclaim to the World, that they have little Understanding, or no great Uprightness.

Thirdly, *Forbear Aggravating.* *Epicetus* says every thing has *two Handles*: And if so, Ingenuity (to mention nothing higher) should teach us never to take hold of the *worst*.

Where there are no Faults, be sure to make none: Where there are but little ones, make them not great: Where there are great ones, make them not bigger than they are.

Too many go the contrary way, and are violent in it: They love to raise Mountains out of Mole-hills, and to blow up harmless Shadows into hideous Monsters: What is spoken in height of Fansie, they draw down to a common Sense: And what passes in heat of Passion or Dispute, they interpret to be Mens settled Judgments: What they find amiss in the Speeches, Writings and Carriages of *some*, they impute to *all* of the *same Rank* in which they stand, it may be to the *whole Church* of which they are.

But they who take such a lawless Liberty as this, may make any thing out of any thing, and transform the beautifullest pieces of Religion into black and bloughtry Prophaneness. Thus the Eternal Son of GOD, for asserting his Divinity, was arraign'd of Blasphemy, *Matt. 26.65.* And for working Miracles by the Power of the HOLY GHOST,

**GHOST**, was decry'd for a Conjurer ; the **Jews** averring openly to his Face, that *He cast out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of Devils.*

And what a Multitude of wretched Aggravators are there in this Age ? Such as busily employ their Tongues and Pens, not only in making bad things worse (which is an ill work, and speaks them very Corrupt that do it) but also in perverting things that are good, so as to make them seem Odious and Impious ; as if they took a Pride in letting the World know they have Pestilential Ink, or a Breath so Virulent, as to be able, in a manner, to blast Holiness it self.

Fourthly, *Forbear Reproaching.* Use no opprobrious or disgraceful Language; for as that proceeds from want of Temper, and aloud proclaims us to be sharp and bitter; so it tends but to the Increase of Gaul and Acrimony: Rather obey the Apostle therefore, who in the close of this Chapter, charges Christians to *put away all Bitterness, Clamour and evil Speaking :* Let no abusive or exasperating Reflections be made by us, either upon those in Communion with us, or upon any amongst us or about us: *Devilish Papists, Damn'd Fanaticks, Mad Dissenters,* or the like, are words that sound ill, and signify worse ; for they that *so let fly against their Fellow-Christians, intending basely to brand them, do most shamefully stigmatize themselves:* If they were reputed *Carnal,* and recorded for such, who said, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollo, 1 Cor. 3. 4.* what Character must they come under, who in spite and disparagement to their Brethren, call them by names of a worse Distinction ? Certainly they forget how the Son of G O D , when His perfidious Disciple came to betray Him, gave him no worse Title than that of *Friend.* And how the Prince of the Angels contesting with the Devil ; in the midst

midst of Altercation, durst not bring, ~~zealov BaGenuis,~~ a Charge of Reproach against him.

Fifthly, *Forbear Revenging*. Dearly Beloved avenge not your selves, says the SPIRIT, Rom. 12. 19. To do that would be daring and dangerous: For besides that 'tis a Breach of the Gospel-Precept, of not rendering Evil for Evil; It is moreover an Incroachment upon GOD's Right, and a bold Usurpation of His Prerogative, who has appropriated Revenge unto Himself: *Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the LORD.* And more than once the Psalmist calls Him, *The GOD to whom Vengeance belongeth.* Not that He has made the Work peculiar to Himself for any extraordinary Pleasure He takes in it; but because He only is able to execute it aright; in fitting Instances, that is, and just Proportions: For He only knows the Malice of Mens Hearts, and the Peevishness of their Spirits, and the secret Malignity of their Intentions, as well as the true Obliquity and Baseness of their Actions: Which we being utterly Ignorant of, upon that account also must forbear Revenge, else we undertake what we are unable justly to perform; another piece of unwarrantable Rashness and Presumption.

Leaving Vengeance to GOD therefore, who alone can take it in equitable Measures, and with unerring Exactness; let us give up our selves to the opposite Duties, as the Gospel requires, and be very Diligent and Exemplary in them. As we are instructed in the last Verse of this Chapter, *Let us be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD for CHRIST's sake hath forgiven us.* And as we are taught elsewhere, *If our Enemies hunger, let us feed them, if they thirst, let us give them drink.* Let us do good against evil, and overcome evil with good; and never requite the worst Unkindnesses, but with Prayers and Civilities.

**Civilities.** So we shall conform to the Primitive Christians, and signalize our selves by a noble Imitation of their Glorious Patterns ; of whom we find it thus recorded, *Being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted we suffer it ; being defamed we intreat,* 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13.

But if the Spirit of Revenge be so strong in any, that they cannot bridle or restrain it, I will shew them how they may best vent it: Let them seriously think how many Wrongs, and withall how grievous ones, they have done to GOD, their Neighbours, and their own Souls ; and let their vindictive Humour run out against their Sins, and be spent upon themselves: So they shall break no Unity.

Which if we would not do, we must *Forbear one another* at least in the several Instances mentioned: For Despising Mens Failings, Censuring their Actions, Aggravating their Faults, Reproaching their Persons, and Revenging their Ill turns ; are almost direct and natural Provocations to Wrath, and Strife, and Hatred, and Malice. And where-ever these Evils rise and rule, there is, there can be, no room for Unity : There are and must be Heart-burnings and Animosities, and they have always Jars and Discord in their Train. Unless therefore we exercise mutual *Forbearance* in the aforesaid Cases, and that with all good Care and Conscience, we plainly shew we are no Friends to Unity. Perhaps I might say, we are perfect, cruel Enemies to it, and instead of healing the fearful Gashes made in it, do stab it to the Heart, and add to its bleeding gaping Wounds.

As to forbearing *Ecclesiastical Impositions*, I have said nothing ; that's the Concern of those in Authority, and it is not the part of a Popular Discourse to prescribe to Governors: Though I cannot but think it would be matter of Joy to good Christians, to see the Terms of Communion

Communion with any pure Church made as few as they may be, and those few made as *easie* as they can be, by being stretch'd out to the utmost Extent, of a wise, and safe, and most enlarged Charity.

And happy it is, where in framing and receiving of Church-Constitutions, favourable Indulgence and Condescension in the Rulers, meet with Flexibility and obediential Compliance in the People: For where the Tempers of both are so laudable in themselves, and Congruous to each other, they will be sure Foundations of a solid Unity: Of such a Unity, as by being Pleasing and Satisfactory in its Conditions, will be either indissoluble, or of lasting Duration.

And here I beg leave to make one Remark upon what occurs in the Fifteenth of the *A&S*: In that Chapter we find the Apostles and Elders together holding a Council. And after serious and mature Debates, relating to certain Gentile Converts, they came to this prudent and moderate Determination. *It seemed good to the HOLY GHOST and to us, to lay no greater Burthen upon you, than these NECESSARY Things.* Now that Council being the most Apostolical that ever met, *this* must be the most Authentick that was ever made, and so the purest President, if not perfectest Standard for Sacred Impositions, that the Catholick Church can shew, or go by upon Earth. And *this Council, and this Canon*, laying no other things upon Christians, but what were *Necessary*: Hence it will follow, that if Particular Churches would draw the *first and best Example* into Practice; they must take the same Measures, and impose only such things as are absolutely *Necessary* in their own Nature, or else upon great and high Accounts.

CANON

And when we find in the Case alledged, that an indifferent thing, *Abstinence from things Strangled*, was required as Necessary, to further the Association of Judaizing Christians with Believing Gentiles: From hence it may be argued with Parity of Reason, that 'tis necessary Indifferent things should not be imposed, where that Imposition may hinder the Coalescence of dissenting Christians with the imposing Church.

Yet this, on the other side, must be added: That *no indifferent things imposed*, nor any thing *less* than *down-right Sin* in the Terms of Communion with any Church, can justifie our Separation from that Church. And the Reason is evident, because Separation, where it is not absolutely needful to avoid Sin, becomes a Sin in it self, by being an unlawful Breach of that Unity of the SPIRIT, which G O D hath so positively and peremptorily enjoyned. And where Separation is thus sinful (as it always is, where we are not forc'd upon it to shun Sin) we must chuse to submit to any Inconveniences, rather than be guilty of it. For it is much better that we should be uneasie, than that G O D should be offended. Much better for us to be incommoded in our Circumstances, than to be defiled in our Consciences.

Nor may we leave a Church for *more Purity's sake*, in whose Communion we may continue *without Sin*. For besides that upon this Account, we may for ever separate and sub-divide, and run out *Criminous Schisms* into an endless Process or Multiplication: We must be grievously Preposterous in our Procedure. What sensible Man would attempt to wash his Hands white with Ink? Or go about to take a Spot from off his Face, by plunging himself over Head and Ears into Mire? And are not they as little rational in their Enterprize, and not only *more Absurd* but *Faulty* too, that seek to advance Purity by

by sinning ; and that commit a Crime, to cure an Imperfection? And this is truly the case of those, who withdraw from one Church in whose Communion they are innocent and safe; to set up another purer than that. Instead of bettering themselves, they become really worse; and well they may, and needs they must, because they do evil that good may come, Rom. 3. 8.

To check Inclinations of separating upon such an account, it may properly be considered, that no Church upon Earth is, or can be *completely Pure*: Some kind of Drossiness cannot chuse but be Inherent in it, as being indeed of the very Nature of it. And can it consist with Reason, to pull a living Body to pieces, to rinse its Bowels from such an Impurity as is rather *Natural* than *Noxious*? Especially if we consider, that when all is done, *Natural Feculence* will still be *necessary*, and remain *inseparable*, unless the Body wherein it rests, be clarified from it by some mighty Change. And when the Church has undergone the Change she hopes for, she shall then be a *Pure* Church indeed. For she shall be *Glorious*, not having Spot, or Wrinkle, or any such thing; but shall be *Holy and without Blemish*, Eph. 5. 27. But this being the Privilege of her Triumphant State, it is not to be look'd for in any part of her while it is *Militant*.

As to forbearing *Punishment*, Care is taken : And I own it is my Hearts desire, and I nothing doubt but it is Yours also (and even meer good Nature, without the additional Tenderness of Religion, cannot methinks but prompt all to wish it) That *Penal Laws* may never touch the *Harmless*, but have the Dint of their Severity turn'd upon the *Obstinate*. Penal Inflictions must be improper to lay upon Men of good Minds, and hurtless Principles;

that Innocently go on in wrong ways *merely* because they *scruple* the Right: For such harsh Methods, instead of inward Satisfaction, the thing they want, do only give them outward Trouble. And as for honest well-meaning Christians, who are no whit leavened with Perverseness or Contumacy, and whose Fault lies wholly in their *Understanding*: Poor Souls! they are Unhappy enough in erronious Consciences, and need not be *punisht* too because they are miserable. Again therefore I wish, that all who err in Simplicity, may escape with Impunity; and none may smart for what they cannot help.

Nor needs this Forbearance (which is supposed to make all *Cautious Discrimination* betwixt the Tender-conscienc'd and others) be a Ground or Occasion of *Jealousie* to the State: For where G O D sees it impartially exercised, He will find the Government so like his Own, that his watchful Providence will take due Care that such a Lenity shall rather establish, than weaken or overthrow it. And so I pass to the sixth Rule.

*Live in Christian Love.* The Church of C H R I S T, in this very Chapter, is compared to an *Humane Body*; and elsewhere in Scripture to a *Stone Building*. Now as such a Body must have *Sinews* to knit its Joyns, and such a Building must have *Mortar* to cement its Stones: So the *Christian Church* must have *Christian Love* to unite its Members. And therefore the Apostle, for preserving Unity, in the sixth place, exhorts us to Amity. Yea, he gives a broad Hint, that even *Toleration* or *Forbearance* it self, will no farther promote Unity, than as it proceeds from this Principle, by beseeching us to forbear one another, *as *as* *any*, in Love.*

Love

Love is the very Life, and Soul, and Essence of Unity; so that where the one is not, the other cannot be: As there can be no Fire, where there is no Heat; and no Day where there is no Light: As there can be no Musick where there is no Harmony; and no Beauty where there is no Symmetry; so there can be no Unity where there is no Love. Look what the Root is to the Tree, or the Foundation to the House: What the Basis is to the Pillar, or the Center to the Circle: And the same is Love to Unity. It cannot be produced, it cannot be preserved, it cannot be increased or perfected without it.

Here then let us do our part again: Let us *Love as Brethren*, as we are counseled from on high; and let *Brotherly Love continue*. Let us be *knit together in Love*, and be rooted and grounded in Love, and walk in Love, as CHRIST hath loved us. And truly though Unity were not the Effect of this; yet who would not chuse, and study, and strive to live in Love, considering how delectable a thing it is? Delectable, I must own, beyond my Ability of describing it. Only this let me say, It is an inexhaustible Fountain of singular Pleasure: A Spring of secret, but high Contentment; and a Source from whence flows the incessant Streams of a noble Satisfaction. There is nothing more Soft, nothing more Sweet, nothing more Generous and thoroughly gratifying amongst virtuous Passions, than an exalted, refined, universal Love. And therefore GOD has enjoyn'd it, and made it the *second great Commandment*, like the First; not only to give us matter of Duty, but to lay a Foundation of Happiness for us. And truly did we love all the World as our selves, and did they love us so again (according to the Tenour of the Divine Law) how could we be Happier here upon Earth, or what could raise us nearer to Heaven?

Where,

Where, I dare confidently affirm, that the choicest part of the Saints Felicity, lies in their Love to G O D, and one another.

In Compliance therefore with the Holy Direction, let us be *kindly affectioned one to another*; and let us *provoke one another to love*. Let our Love be of the right kind, without Dissimulation: And let it be of a just Extent, reaching to all without Exception: Only it must be freer and more fervent to some, than it is to others, according to the Grounds and Measures of a wise Distinction.

And since our L O R D bids us *love our Enemies*; that any are such, must be no Bar to our Affections. Yea, there is reason enough for that Love, besides His Command: For if we be his unfeigned Disciples, the worst our Enemies can do us, be they never so bad, is but to benefit us: To give us occasion to act our Duties, and exercise our Virtues, and so to improve our Graces here, and our Glories for ever. And have we not sufficient reason to love the Instruments of our so great Good? Yea, should any prove such Enemies to us, as to persecute us to the very Death, they would be but our eternal Benefactors: For even while they kill us, their kindly cruel Hands would help to set a Crown of Life upon our Heads, and a Brighter too than other Saints shall wear. So that indeed we ought not only to love our Enemies, but to love them for the *very Injuries* they think to do us; for even by them they advantage us mightily, and while they design us nothing but Mischief, they do obliquely, and beyond their Intention, serve our best Interests.

I note but one Rule more which is included in the Text, and it is this: If you would preserve Unity, *be careful*

*ful to maintain Peace.* As that helps to tye us fast together in one, so without it we inevitably fall into Divisions, as a Sheaf of Corn falls asunder that has no Band. And therefore the Apostle, as a true Promoter of the Unity of the S P I R I T, enjoyns us to keep it, *as τὸς ἀνθρώπων τὸς ἀγαπής,* in the Bond of Peace. And great reason we have to do so, there being no one single Duty which G O D has charged upon us more strictly: For in the Holy Writings what is more forcibly recommended, more peremptorily required, more frequently and also more earnestly inculcated than Peace? *Seek Peace and pursue it.* *Have Peace one with another.* *Be at Peace amongst your selves.* *Follow Peace with all Men.* If it be possible, as much as lyeth in you, live peaceably with all Men. So that it is not enough for us to accept Peace when it is offered; to embrace it when we meet it; to hold it when we have it: But when we have it not we must seek it; when it flees from us we must follow it; and never stop till we overtake it. Though the Terms be hard, yet if they be reasonable, if they be lawful, and so possible, Our L O R D commands us not to refuse them; His Gospel binds us to submit to them, and that with all Men. Be they who they will, what they will, if they be but Men, we must, if possible, live peaceably with them.

And no wonder such solemn Injunctions from Heaven, should be laid upon Christians to maintain Peace, when it is a thing not only transcendently Excellent in it self, but attended with many inestimable Benefits: I beg leave to mention but a few of them.

*It defends from many Sins.* He that is not at Peace with his Brother, is ready to be Angry with him without a Cause: To revile him, and call him Rache, or Fool: To be reveng'd

reveng'd on him for his Oversight or petty Injuries: To quarrel him, and fight him (as the unhappy Custom is) it may be to kill him; at least to Hate him; whereby, in St. John's account, he is a Murtherer though he kill him not. Peace is a good Defensative from these Evils, and from many other which now I cannot reckon up.

*It is a mighty Friend to Justice. Then had thy Peace been as a River, and thy Righteousness as the Waves of the Sea,* says the Prophet, *Isaiah 48. 18.* Where Peace flows as a River, there Righteousnes swells like an Ocean. But if the River of Peace be dried or damnd up, the Sea of Justice will be at a low Ebb.

*It fits us for the Enjoyment of G O D's propitious Presence. Live in Peace, and the G O D of Love and Peace shall be with you,* 2 Cor. 13.11. But He that suffered not David to build Him a Temple, because he was a Man of Blood; will never make them Temples for Himself to reside in, that are not Children of Peace. For G O D's sake therefore live in Peace, that so ye may be Happy in the Fruition of his Presence.

I might go on and add, it is an Help to Duty; a Safeguard to Truth; a Furtherance of Love; the Jewell of Joy; a Support of Order; Encouragement of Learning, Arts and Sciences; the thing which Seasons and Sweetens all Accommodations, and crowns the highest Prosperity with Happiness. But I give only one Hint more of its Worth.

*It is a main piece of our future Recompence, and a Branch of the Eternal Worlds Felicity: To every Man that worketh good, there shall be Glory, Honour and Peace, Rom. 2.10.*

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Not only a peaceful *Mind* and *Conscience*, but a peaceful *State* and *Condition* above. As there shall be no Difference there betwixt G O D and Man, by reason of a perfect Reconciliation; and no Feuds betwixt a Man and Himself, by reason of absolute Contentment: So there shall be no Discord betwixt one Man and another; by reason of a thorough Composure of all things, and an entire Pacification on all sides, fixing the whole Body of Blessed ones in a sweet Agreement. As our Sins shall there be turned into Innocence, our Corruptions into Holiness, our Sorrows into Joys, and our Troubles into Triumphs: So all our various Enmities and Dissentions shall expire into endless Peace and Quietness. O then let us in some measure live now, as we shall do hereafter: Live here upon Earth for one short Moment, as we must do in the Heavenly Regions for ever; if at last we be worthy to inhabit them.

I now conclude with one Direction, which if well observed, will conduce effectually, to the settling of an Happy Peace amongst us.

*Let us be sincerely Religious. The Wisdom that is from above, is first Pure, and then Peaceable,* James 3. 17. And where this Wisdom, which is true Religion, prevails in us, and gets the Ascendent over all evil Principles, it will certainly Impregnate us with its own noble Properties; making us not only *Pure* in our *Nature*, but *pacifick* in our *Temper*. And nothing indeed can be more powerful either to procure or establish Peace, than true Religion. For the truly Religious mortifie their Lusts (from whence come Wars and Strifes amongst us, both Naturally and Judicially at once,) they subdue their Passions, bridle their Tongues, bear Affronts, suffer Injuries, shun Debates, E obey

obey Magistrates, submit to Ministers, hate Divisions, love Concord, offend none, oblige all: So that would every one of us be sincere Christians, no farther Care need be taken for Peace: It would as certainly be the Result or Product of our Religion, as it is the Law and end of the same.

And as true Religion would make for Peace (verifying its Character of first Pure and then Peaceable) so GOD would see that Peace should be the Effect or Consequent of it. *When a Mans ways please the L O R D, He maketh even his Enemies to be at Peace with him, Prov. 16. 7.* So that were our ways sincerely Religious, and pleasing to the L O R D, Peace and we should quickly meet, and after that should never part; our very Enemies would be unable to ravish it from us. Then it would not matter in the least, how Numerous, Malicious, Potent, Politick, Furious, Implacable, our Adversaries are, or at any time prove; for they should all be at Peace with us: If they would not chuse to be so, GOD would make them to be so; and would some way or other bind them to the Peace, and bind us up in it.

And when once we are bound up in the Bond of Peace, how fast shall we stand in the Unity of the S P I R I T, and how securely shall we keep it? Provided, that is, that we always endeavour it. And as it behoves us all to be *Candidori*, diligently and strenuously endeavouring to keep it by all good Means: So particularly by the Use of those good Rules now delivered: Which as I dare not, so You ~~must~~ not call my Rules: For though I have opened and urged them; yet, as has been noted, they are the Rules of St. Paul, and so the Divine Rules of G O D Himself: Of that G O D Who maketh Men to be of one Mind in an House.

*House.* Of that GOD who best knows by what Rules and Means to make the whole Christian Church be as once it was; *of one Heart and one Soul,* Acts 4. 32.

Which that it may be, let us humbly implore it at the hands of GOD: Let us make it a daily Petition in our private Devotions: And as often as we can, let us joyn with the Church in her *Publick Prayers*, and supplicate for Unity with becoming Earnestness: Where she prays, in the *Liturgy*, *That it may please GOD to give to all Nations Unity, Peace and Concord:* And in the *Collect for all Conditions of Men*, *That all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of Truth, and hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life:* And in the *Prayer for the Church-Militant*, *That GOD would inspire continually the Universal Church with the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Concord;* and grant that all they that do confess his Holy Name, may agree in the Truth of his Holy Word, and live in Unity and Godly Love. Where our Church, I say, prays thus for Unity, let us humbly and heartily joyn in the Petitions, pouring them out with an elevated Zeal, and the highest Streins of a most intense and vehement Fervency.

And at present let us beg the invaluable Blessing, in part of that *Collect*, which is the *last save one*, in the *Office for the late solemn Monthly Fast*: Which I could wish all Holy Supplicants, that are Lovers of Unity, would constantly use in their devout Retirements and Addresses to Heaven; till such time as they either compose or meet with a more pregnant Form.

O GOD the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, our only SAVIOUR the Prince of Peace, look down in much Pity and Compassion upon this Church and Nation. Give us Grace seriously to lay to Heart the great Dangers we are in by our unhappy Divisions. Take away all Hatred and Prejudice, and whatsoever else may binder us from Godly Union and Concord: That as there is but one Body, and one SPIRIT, and one hope of our Calling, one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism, one GOD and Father of us all: So we may henceforth be all of one Heart, and of one Soul, united in one Holy Bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one Mind, and one Mouth Glorifie Thee O GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

**F I N I S H**

